

DATE: February 22, 2011

TO: Barbara Ross, Deputy Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

FROM: Nathan Randall, Planner
Department of Planning and Zoning

SUBJECT: Special Use Permit #2010-0064
Administrative Special Use Permit
Site Use: Child Day Care Center
Applicant: Meade Memorial Episcopal Church
Location: 322 North Alfred Street
Zone: RB / Residential Townhouse

Request

Special Use Permit #2010-0064 is a request to operate a new day care center with up to six children at the Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. The day care center will care for children between 6:00am and 7:00pm daily in one classroom on the second floor of the church building. Although the church is exempt from needing to obtain a day care license from the Virginia Department of Social Services, the applicant has confirmed that it intends to obtain this license nonetheless.

Background

Day care centers have existed in the church at various times since at least the 1960s, with the most recent being approved by SUP in 1987. Church staff indicates that no day care operations have occurred in the building in recent years, however.

The applicant initially applied for this Administrative SUP request in late September 2010. Staff delayed approval based on neighborhood objections and the applicant's need for more time to refine its proposal and provide additional information. The applicant ultimately reduced the number of children to be cared for at the day care center from 50 to six.

Community Outreach

Public notice was provided through eNews, via the City's website, and by posting a placard on the site. Staff received several objections to both the initial and revised day care proposals from immediate neighbors. City staff discussed these concerns, largely related to parking and traffic, with the neighbors and Church staff at a January 13th community meeting. Neighbors in attendance were satisfied that their concerns would be addressed through the inclusion of standard conditions of approval and the requirement that the church may not use street parking to satisfy parking requirements for the day care use. The Church agreed to provide all day care parking in its on-site surface lot.

Parking/ Drop-off

Section 8-200(A)(11) of the Zoning Ordinance requires day care centers with one classroom to provide two off-street parking spaces. The applicant satisfies this requirement with two spaces located in the 13-space surface parking lot on church property. The pick-up and drop-off of children will also occur within this parking lot and will be supervised by staff, according to the applicant.

Staff Action

Staff supports the applicant's request for a day care center at Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. Generally speaking, the establishment of new day care centers in Alexandria is beneficial given that such uses are normally neighborhood-serving and are in high demand.

Staff acknowledges that the initial 50-child day care proposal had some potential for parking issues given that the applicant had not clearly demonstrated that the required number of parking spaces would be provided. However, the applicant has voluntarily reduced the number of children at the center down to six. This number is so small as to have no impact on the neighborhood with regard to noise, parking or traffic, especially given that the applicant will provide all employee parking and pick-up/drop-off in the surface parking lot on church property. In addition, some of the customers of the day care center are expected to be neighborhood families.

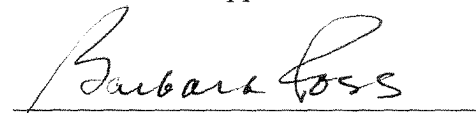
Although neighbors have raised objections to both the initial and revised proposals, the applicant appears to have sufficiently addressed their specific concerns about the proposed day care center and their general concerns with other church functions. For example, the applicant also agreed to talk with the owner of the parking lot across N. Alfred Street to clarify the availability of parking there for other church functions and for neighborhood residents.

Subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff hereby approves the Special Use Permit request.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION - DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING:

Date: February 24, 2011

Action: Approved



Barbara Ross, Deputy Director

- Attachments: 1) Special Use Permit Conditions
2) City Department Comments
3) Statement of Consent

CONDITIONS OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2010-0064

The new owner is responsible for ensuring that the following conditions are adhered to at all times. Violation of any of the conditions may result in fines and/or referral to public hearing by the Planning Commission and City Council.

1. The Special Use Permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. The hours of operation shall be limited to between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. daily. (P&Z)
3. The maximum number of children permitted at the child care facility at any one time shall be six. (P&Z)
4. The facility shall obtain all required state, federal, and local licenses and certificates prior to opening its place of business. (P&Z)
5. The applicant shall maintain a mechanism for communicating with neighbors such as providing contact information for after-hours problems, having regular meetings, including a neighbor on the church's Day Care Board, or other similar means of communication. (P&Z)
6. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all special use permit provisions and requirements. (P&Z)
7. The administrative permit approved by the Director pursuant to Section 11-513 of the Zoning Ordinance shall be displayed in a conspicuous and publicly accessible place. A certificate provided by the city shall inform the public of its right to examine the list of standards associated with the permit. A copy of the list of standards with the permit shall be kept on the premises and made available for examination by the public upon request. (P&Z)
8. Trash and garbage shall be stored inside or in sealed containers that do not allow odors to escape or invasion by animals. No trash or debris shall be allowed to accumulate outside of those containers. (P&Z) (T&ES)
9. Litter on the site and on public rights-of-way and spaces adjacent to or within 75 feet of the premises shall be monitored and picked up at least twice during the day and at the close of the business, and more often if necessary, to prevent an unsightly or unsanitary accumulation, on each day that the business is in operation. (T&ES)

10. The applicant shall maintain at least two parking spaces in the surface parking lot on church property for use by the day care at all times that it is in operation. (P&Z)
11. Access to adjacent properties or driveway entrances shall not be blocked at any time. (P&Z)
12. The applicant shall provide adequate drop off and pick up facilities in the applicant's parking lot that minimizes impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The applicant shall ensure that no vehicles park on N. Alfred Street or Princess Street for pick-up or drop-off. (P&Z) (T&ES)
13. The applicant shall provide information about alternative forms of transportation to access the location of the day care center, including but not limited to print and electronic promotional materials, posting on the day care website, and other similar methods. (T&ES)
14. The applicant shall encourage its employees and customers to use mass transit or to carpool when traveling to and from work, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes and transit are sold, and advertising of carpool opportunities. (T&ES)
15. The applicant shall require its employees who drive to work to use off-street parking. (P&Z) (T&ES)
16. The use shall comply with the City's noise ordinance. No outdoor speakers shall be permitted and no amplified sound shall be audible at the property line. (T&ES)
17. Prior to the day care center opening for business, the applicant shall contact the Community Relations Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the child care center. (Police)
18. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit one year after approval and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as a result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation; or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z)